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THE WAR ON GERMAN SUBMARINES.

SIR EDWARD CARSON

ON THE

BRITISH NAVY'S SUCCESS.

T. FISHER UNWIN, Ltd.
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THE WAR ON GERMAN SUBMARINES.

Sir Edward Carson on the British Navy's Success.

WHAT has the British Navy done in eighteen days to meet the intensified policy of German "frightfulness," both against the Allies and against neutrals, as practised by her submarines? Sir Edward Carson, First Lord of the Admiralty, introducing the Navy Estimates in the House of Commons on February 21, devoted the greater part of his speech to answering this question.

"My duty," he declared, "is to tell the House and the country the whole extent of the menace." He did not disguise its character:

> *"It is grave. It is serious. It has not yet been solved. I can honestly say that we have never for a moment ceased to work at it in the Admiralty. But no single magic remedy exists, or probably will exist. Nevertheless, I am confident that in the development of measures which have been and are being devised its seriousness will by degrees be greatly mitigated."*

AN ANTI-SUBMARINE DEPARTMENT.

He told the House what had been done by way of organisation. "We have established at the Admiralty an Anti-Submarine Department, composed of the best and most experienced men we could draw for that purpose from men serving at sea. Their whole time is devoted to working out the problem. I have had their reports brought before the Board, and the Board take full responsibility for the approval of their methods and suggestions. Shortly after Sir John Jellicoe came to the Admiralty he issued an invitation to every member of the Fleet to send in any suggestion that occurred to him for dealing with this difficulty. We have, in addition to the Anti-Submarine Department, the Board of Inventions and Research. It is presided over by Admiral Lord Fisher, and associated with him are the greatest scientists the country possesses. He is there to tell them the wants of the Admiralty, and they are there to work out the methods by which those wants can be met—men like Sir J. Thomson, Sir Charles Parsons, Sir G. Beilby, and many associated with them of equal distinction. These are some of the greatest men we have. They give us of their best freely, and, as far as I am concerned, I cannot for a moment imagine that a great and distinguished public servant, who has done so much in the past as Lord Fisher has done, is not also giving to the Admiralty ungrudgingly the whole of his abilities and the whole of his services in trying to solve a problem of this kind, which threatens the very existence of this country.

ARMING OF MERCHANT SHIPS.

"One matter has greatly helped us," went on Sir Edward. He referred to the law affecting the arming of merchant ships.

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herself damaged, and that she was confident that the submarine had been sunk. A further report was received later that an obstruction which was thought to be the sunk submarine had been located. "This is a claim of which we may say there attaches to it a degree of probability amounting to almost certainty. The injuries to the damaged ship were found to correspond to such injuries as would be cause d by ramming."

His third illustration was that of a report received that two patrol vessels had engaged two enemy submarines and sunk them both, but there were no casualties in the patrol boats and no survivors from the submarines. "A fuller report received of this engagement appears to show that one of the submarines was sunk, but it leaves a degree of doubt about the second."

His fourth illustration was that of one of the British destroyers reporting that she had heavily rammed an enemy submarine which was awash. There was no doubt that the destroyer struck the submarine a severe blow, but it was not possible to establish that the submarine was sunk. This, he thought, might be described as "a case of strong probability."

"POSSIBLE TO IMPROBABLE."

The fifth report was that of an enemy submarine being engaged by two patrol vessels, who were subsequently assisted by two destroyers. "The result of the engagement is reported as doubtful, although it is certain that one of the destroyers was slightly damaged in running over the conning-tower of the submarine. In another case one of our patrol vessels reported striking a submerged object after engaging an enemy submarine, and an examination of the patrol vessel bore out this report. It is believed that the submerged object struck was the submarine engaged, but it is not quite clear, and in this case there is a considerable degree of doubt."

He gave three more illustrations in which the claim was made, ranging from possible to improbable. A patrol vessel reported that she had been in action with an enemy submarine, that the fifth shot hit the submarine's conning-tower, and it was believed that she was sunk. The second case was that of a smaller airship sighting a submarine on the surface and dropping a bomb just after the submarine had dived. Lastly, there was a case in which an aeroplane dropped a bomb on the enemy submarine when in the act of diving. The submarine was not seen again, but the result was quite unknown.

"IT WILL BE SOLVED."

That was the situation. "I have neither tried to underestimate it nor to exaggerate it." He believed that the menace could be and would be beaten. It could only be solved by the nation itself acting in the ways he had indicated in conjunction with the Navy, "but," concluded the First Lord, "that it can be and will be solved is certain."

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